

The Human Touch

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and much more!

Director's Message



Lisa-Michele Church, Executive Director

I hope you are all enjoying our beautiful spring weather in Utah! It has been a month of employee recognition opportunities at the Department. We are very proud of Richard Anderson, Director of DCFS, who was selected by the Governor as the state-wide Manager of the Year. Richard was nominated by his own staff, as they respect him for his leadership and dedication. Several others were finalists, and some DHS employees are contenders for Outstanding State Employee. Elsewhere in this issue you will see more DHS employees being recognized and honored for their efforts.

I am always happy to attend employee awards banquets, staff meetings and lunches in the field offices. I am excited to be touring DCFS offices in Vernal and Logan later this month. When I meet each of you I can see the commitment in your faces. Thank you for all you do. I know you do it because it needs to be done, but it takes a special person to deal with some of the challenges we encounter. I hope you feel appreciated.

Employees who go the extra mile are not unusual at Human Services.

I was impressed by the recent news coverage of our own Office of Public Guardian (OPG). They are a small operation that performs critically needed work for people who literally have no one else. When you see the day-to-day individual attention that OPG pays to its clients, it makes you feel like these vulnerable citizens are in good hands. Thanks to Lori and her invaluable staff!

If you haven't had a chance yet to see our new DHS video, ask your supervisor to get a copy. Dave Thomas has done an excellent job of capturing our mission in a 15-minute presentation that gives an overview of the whole department. It is a great tool to use at staff meetings or public speaking opportunities.

One of my goals is to communicate our work positively to the public. We can all do this every day. We have such a great story to tell, and we need to take pride in our work. Every one of you makes a difference!

Lisa-Michele Church

A Life of Focus on Youth - Salvador Mendez *Lisa Schauerhamer, JJS*

"I have worked with youth all my life," says Salvador Mendez. "My interest and drive to work with youth who haven't had opportunities is driven by their need for advocates at the same time advocating appropriate intervention. This is because historically the 'system' has been abusive to kids. This fact has kept my focus on advocating for youth."

If there is a way to support youth, it is most likely Salvador Mendez of Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) has been involved. He has dedicated his career to serving the community and youth, working in Juvenile Justice for over twenty-five years.

He has worked as the assistant program director over the Salt Lake Early Intervention programs for JJS, and recently became Director. Salvador was a featured speaker at the prestigious 5th Annual Pete Suazo Social Justice Awards Luncheon in conjunction with the Diversity Conference. In 2005, he was awarded the Salt Lake Area Gang Project Outstanding Achievement Award, in recognition of his support and service to the community, our youth and the Salt Lake Area Gang Project.

Who is Salvador A. Mendez? He is originally from Iseita, Texas; however, he has lived in Utah most of his life. Mendez earned his bachelor's degree in Latin American history, with a minor in sociology and his master's in social work from the University of Utah. He is active in numerous community organizations including Utah Correctional Association, National Correctional Association, National Coalition of Hispanic and Human Services Organization, National Council of La Raza and the Community Advisory Board for the Salt Lake Area Gang Project, and serves on the Board of Directors for the Utah Foster Care Foundation.



Salvador Mendez



CARS, SUNSET & IRAQ

Loralee Gacioch and Davis Area Youth Center Staff

"Thank you," said children, over and over in broken English, as they gathered around Sgt. James Manchego in Iraq.

Sgt. Manchego and his team were on a very special mission, giving out 25 Pinewood Derby cars made by youth at the Davis Area Youth Center in Sunset, Utah. Pictures of the cars being made were featured in December's Human Touch.

"We were able to secure a site and from the time the convoy pulled up, we were overwhelmed with the happy Iraqi children as they ran and jumped for our attention," Sgt. Manchego said via email. "They crowded us so quickly we couldn't hand cars out fast enough."

Although Sgt. Manchego went to the Middle East to fix convoy vehicles, he expressed how good it felt to "fix the hearts of children a little bit too", with the gift of the derby cars made by the youth at the Davis Center.



These pictures truly are worth a 1,000 words!





Delivering Meals and Smiles

Chuck Diviney, DAAS

Five days a week, 52 weeks a year, meals are delivered to homebound, frail and isolated older adults by our Department of Human Services (DHS) Administrative staff. Each weekday, Salt Lake County Aging Services delivers meals to the DHS building and, during their lunch hour, DHS staff visit their neighbors with a meal, a smile and genuine concern for their well-being.

"Delivering Meals on Wheels (MOW) is an excellent opportunity to be of service to others who just could not make it without such assistance," said Lee Ann Whitaker, Division of Aging and Adult Services. Lee Ann is the vital connection between volunteers and people waiting for their lunch each day. She schedules the volunteers and completes the necessary paperwork, takes phone calls, and even steps right in when others are unable to do their route.

Lee Ann and her family know, from personal experience, how vital Meals on Wheels can be, so she welcomes the opportunity to give back and help others. She was the caregiver for both parents when her father was bedridden from bone cancer and her mother had pneumonia. Meals on Wheels volunteers helped. "My schedule didn't allow time to prepare lunch and it was always such a delight and relief when the deliverers arrived," she said. "I could leave the house for awhile, knowing my parents would have a nutritional lunch and some company."

Meals on Wheels allows other families the comfort of knowing that, at least once a day, volunteers are checking in on their loved ones to provide them food and assure their well-being. Many of the DHS neighbors wait at their window for the volunteers to start up their walkways and give them a big greeting.



Lee Ann Whitaker

Meals on Wheels is a volunteer program. Volunteers may sign up for one or more days each month and use their lunch time, vehicle and gas to deliver meals. Anyone who would like to volunteer may contact Lee Ann at (801) 538-3915 or lwhitaker@utah.gov. A formal application must be submitted and a background check will be completed. Once approval is received, Lee Ann says, "the new volunteer becomes a member of a group of some of the best people that there are!"



Recognition At-a-Glance Idea

Recognize a co-worker for their graduation!

Combining a career and school is a huge task – yet many Department of Human Services employees do just that. Graduation is great time to celebrate their accomplishment. Perhaps have a team picnic, give them a card or stop by their office and say, "Wow and congratulations!"



Connecting with Office of Recovery Services

Catherine Taylor, ORS

St. George - "My passion is children. It's all about children-- whether I'm prosecuting, establishing paternity or child support, my belief is in helping people grow up and learn to make adjustments in life," said Paul Graf, AAG and Section Chief for the St. George, Child and Family Support Division.

He is also deputized as a Special Assistant US Attorney. In this capacity, Graf prosecutes criminal matters on federal lands near St. George, such as Zion, Bryce and Capitol Reef Parks.

Graf's commitment to children began before joining ORS. As the Washington County prosecutor, his work on sexual assault cases led to the early use of DNA as evidence. That knowledge is now invaluable when he establishes paternity for the children ORS serves.

The St. George Children's Justice Center (CJC) is another way Paul shows his commitment to children. He was one of the first to get the court to permit children's tape-recorded testimony as victims of assault. This tool provided momentum to the CJC movement in Utah. Children's voices were heard due to Paul's efforts.

"We can't force people to visit their children or pay child support, but we can certainly make it more attractive than the alternative," said Graf a tireless advocate in both the legal and social realms.

Outside of his career, Graf is a talented and accomplished artist. If you're in St. George, look for one of his bronze sculptures on display in the Art Around the Corner street project (near the Eccles Fine Art Center at Dixie State College). If you're in Attorney General Mark Shurtleff's office, look for the buffalo sculpture. No, it's not a Charlie Russell; it's a Paul Graf piece.



Paul Graf, Assistant Attorney General and Section Chief

The Office of Recovery Services has six offices from Ogden to St. George. Each office has an Assistant Attorney General (AAG) co-located to represent ORS in child support enforcement and Medicaid recovery in civil and criminal matters.

ORS child support collections in 2005 included \$133.6 million dollars distributed to children and families. Another \$5.4 million was returned to DHS for children in care.

Ask any St. George child support worker about Paul Graf's knowledge, dedication and commitment, then be prepared to hear a story that will make you nod your head at the wisdom, chuckle at the simple elegance and walk away with tremendous legal and personal insights.

"JJS Support Conference"

Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) Office Support Staff 2006 Conference was enjoyed by over 50 people coming from all regions of the state on April 26.

Amidst laughing and enjoying a nice lunch, staff learned about: Achieving Peak Performance, Reducing Stress, Getting Motivated and Building Bridges. The day closed with an inspiring presentation by popular B98.7 radio host, Erin Collard.

SPRING CLEANING



"When we hear the words "spring cleaning" we think of cleaning every corner. We imagine a perfectly straightened closet, an impeccable junk drawer, and a spotless home." (Source: Healthy Utah – Stress Management Monthly Article)

How about we think of spring cleaning in terms of Total Wellness? How about we give attention to our mind, body, relationships, and spirit, in addition to our homes and yards?

Lisa Schauerhamer, JJS

Spring brings the new desire to get in balance, de-junk our lives of excess stuff, weight, debt, etc.

Here are ten ideas to try this month:

1. Do sit-ups in front of the TV
2. Drink water before a meal
3. Join an exercise group
4. Do yard work
5. Grill, steam or bake instead of frying
6. Try a green salad instead of fries
7. Walk instead of driving whenever you can
8. Work around the house
9. Sit up straight at work
10. Wash the car by hand

(Source: www.smallsteps.gov)

These are a few easy changes to do this month to help you get started on the journey of wellness.

More ideas: <http://www.wellness.com/totalwellness>

Pizza, Live Music and Fun

Katie Willette, DSPD

Meeting people and having fun is a little easier at the "Single's Mingle," organized by four Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) Support Coordinators, Diana Platis, Mark Lance, Janet Davidson and Maureen Richardson.

Diana, Mark and Janet are busy Case Worker Specialists that provide support coordination for individuals receiving services from DSPD and the University of Utah's Neuropsychiatric Institute. Maureen is a Support Coordinator in the DSPD Northern Region.

While in the midst of completing their every day duties, this group of four saw a need for single adults in the Central Region of DSPD to get together and have some fun. They put their heads together and organized "Single's Mingle." Individuals 18 and over, who receive DSPD services or are on the waiting list, are welcome to come and join in the fun.

The Single's Mingle started 8 months ago and has become a very popular monthly social event. Close to 100 people come each month! Volunteers and staff make the evening fun. The volunteer disc jockey brings his unique flair and great music, adding energy and enthusiasm.

Special thanks to Diana for recruiting the DJ who works for North Eastern Services, a DSPD provider, and Mark for coordinating with The Utah State Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center to provide the auditorium for the activity.

The Single's Mingle is a great success, thanks to all four of our caring workers that have gone the extra mile. Each month they find volunteers to help out, make sure the evening runs smoothly, and everyone is having a great time. Their efforts have really paid off! Each month, almost one hundred people look forward to pizza, great music, door prizes and, best of all, mingling with other singles and having fun!